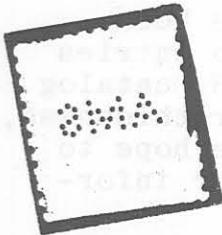


**Take
another
look...
at your
. S. perfins**
by
Harry Rickard



Take a look at the AMS perfin shown here. It is not pattern A-190. The S is smaller than the one shown in the catalog, and the top two inside holes of the M are lower. Is it scarcer than A-190, or more common?

I don't know, but perhaps you can help me find out. Many of you may have some scarce perfins in your collections without realizing it. Nine out of ten newly discovered perfins come from collector duplicates and are the result of careful observation.

Let's face it. Most of us are a bit lazy. We accept the fact that a perfin is B-456 or G-444 just because what we have "looks like the one in the catalog." But there can be subtle differences--in spacing, in configuration, in the sizes of letters and ampersands. With a little practice, you can learn to spot these differences.

Take a look at these examples:

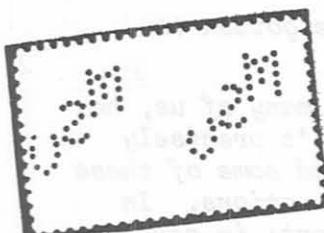


The W/CO at left is not W-55. The C and the O are closer together than the CO in the W-55 in the catalog. Check your copies.



Do broken pins qualify as different varieties? No, most of us will agree to that. But take a look at the MLC at left. Is this MLC an M-154 or an M-154A? It is on a Cleveland precancel, but it has all the holes. A look at the catalog shows that M-154 and M-154A are identical except that M-154A, the Cleveland precancel, has one fewer holes.

--continued on the next page



Here's another broken pin variety. The catalog shows M-253 (the MSU of Michigan State University) with an 8-hole U. But the U originally had 9 holes and some of the dies on the multi-die perforator show all 9 holes--as is clear on this recent commemorative showing two patterns.



Spacing can be a better indicator of a different variety. Look at the CS/SA pattern at left. This looks much like C-323, but the SA is much closer to the CS on this illustration than on the one in the catalog.



The B-B/C of the Brunswick Balke-Collander Company of Chicago is listed as B-46. But the pattern shown at left doesn't match the illustration in the catalog on any point. Is this a re-make of the die or what?



Of course, one of the biggest thrills in collecting U. S. perfins is coming across a brand new perfin--one that is clearly, unmistakably, a brand new one! Such is the case with the GHW shown at left. It just isn't in the catalog.

Those are some observations for openers.

You may have perfins that have been bugging you because they "just don't quite match" the illustrations in the U. S. U. S. catalog. If that's the case, share them with me and we will share them with members through this column. Just send me a good clear Xerox copy so I can make comparisons myself.

I must add one comment to get Joe Balough off the hook. My observations here will not necessarily lead to entries in the catalog. That remains the job of the U. S. catalog editor and there are debatable points about paper thickness, paper shrinkage, and so on, to consider. What we hope to do with this column is provide a clearinghouse for information Joe can use in his decision-making.

One other note. If you have trouble getting close checks on your perfins, try my method. Place your perfin on the illustration, align the end letter precisely and see if the other letters also line up precisely. If they don't, you may have something. You may need to use a magnifying glass to get precise alignment, but it may well be worth your while.

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Editor's note: I do feel an obligation here to make an observation about what can happen to perfin illustrations during the printing of the Bulletin. Minute changes can occur in illustration size as a result of the photolithography process. This is equally true with the printed illustrations you see in the U. S. catalog. To be precise in matters of this type, it may be necessary to compare two perfins rather than a perfin with an illustration.